

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified patent application in view of the amendment above and the remarks below is respectfully requested.

No claims have been canceled in this paper. Claim 1 has been amended in this paper. New claim 22 has been added in this paper. Therefore, claims 1-22 are pending. Of these claims, claims 14-16 have been withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to a nonelected invention. Accordingly, claims 1-13 and 17-22 are under active consideration.

Claims 1-4, 6-7, 13, 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) "as being anticipated by Stencil (US 4,260,005)." In support of the rejection, the Patent Office states the following:

As best seen in Figs. 4 and 6, Stencil discloses a securing nut comprising a straining ring (34) having three grooves (38) each extending 120 degrees to total an entire 360 degrees and, a threaded (at 18) nut body (10) having a neck (52) having three cams (28) in the form of curved cams having a curved gradient which extend less than 60°, in the range of 45°, which are clamped to form a "linear gradient". The straining ring being "shoved" onto the nut and would be secured thereto by a clamping force as it engages the cams.

Later in the Office Action, the Patent Office states the following:

Applicant argues the primary reference to Stencil cannot anticipate the claims because it does not disclose a straining ring shoved onto the neck of the nut and secured thereto by a clamping but instead shows merely a tool. In response, the examiner does not dispute applicant's understanding of Stencil. However, the claims are required to be given their broadest reasonable interpretation and in doing so, the tool as disclosed in Stencil reads on the "straining ring". Indeed there are no limitations claimed of the retaining ring not met by the tool in Stencil. Both "shoved" and "clamping" are functional limitations which are anticipated by the tool in Stencil once in the operative orientation as described in the above rejection.

Applicant respectfully traverses the foregoing rejection. Claim 1, from which claims 2-4, 6-7, 13, 17 and 18 depend, has been amended herein and now recites “[a] securing nut comprising a nut body and a straining ring rotationally arranged on the nut body, the nut body having a neck, the straining ring being shoved onto the neck of the nut body and reversibly secured thereto by clamping, an inner surface of the straining ring having at least two grooves, each of the at least two grooves being a circular arc, the at least two grooves cumulatively extending across an entire angular range of 360°, an outer surface of the neck having a plurality of cams corresponding in number to the number of grooves, each cam being associated with a groove and extending across an angular range of less than 60°.”

Stencel does not anticipate or render obvious claim 1 for at least the reason that Stencel does not teach or suggest a securing nut comprising, among other things, the combination of (i) a nut body and (ii) a straining ring rotationally arranged on a neck of the nut body, the straining ring being shoved onto the neck of the nut body and **reversibly** secured thereto by clamping, an inner surface of the straining ring having at least two grooves, each groove being a **circular arc**.

Stencel, by contrast, is limited in its teachings to a nut (or locking collar) 10 and does not teach or suggest a straining ring. The Patent Office is apparently taking the position that Stencel driver 34, which has a socket 36 with three flat sides 38, corresponds to the claimed straining ring. However, as previously noted by Applicant and as apparently acknowledged by the Patent Office in the outstanding Office Action, driver 34 is merely a tool that is used temporarily to fasten Stencel nut 10 to Stencel bolt (or shear pin) 12 by applying a very strong tightening torque between nut 10 and pin 12. Once driver 34 has been used in the foregoing fashion to secure nut 10 to pin 12, it is removed and, thereafter, does not form a part of the securing nut. In other words, during the normal

use of the Stencel nut, driver 34 is not present. Consequently, Applicant respectfully submits that the Patent Office's reading of the claimed straining ring to encompass Stencel tool 34 is not a reasonable interpretation of the claimed straining ring.

In any event, Applicant respectfully submits that claimed straining ring is also distinguishable over tool 34 of Stencel for at least the following reasons: First, whereas the claimed straining ring has two or more grooves, each groove being a circular arc, none of the sides 38 of Stencel tool 34 is a circular arc; instead, each side 38 is primarily flat.

Second, whereas the claimed straining ring is reversibly secured to the neck of the nut body, Stencel tool 34 cannot similarly be reversibly secured to nut 10. This is because, in use, tool 34 causes lobes 28 of nut 10 to be irreversibly deformed. It is not possible to loosen nut 10 from pin 12 and, thereafter, fasten it again.

Third, whereas the claimed grooves are said to extend across an entire angular range of 360° , the Stencel sides 38 do not extend across an angular range of 360° , but rather, only extend across an angular range of 180° . This is because the Stencel sides 38 form a triangular socket, not a circular socket, and the sum of the internal angles of a triangle socket is 180° , not 360° .

Accordingly, for at least the above reasons, the foregoing rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 5, 8-12 and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) "as being unpatentable over Stencel as applied to claims 1 and 2 above, and further in view of Williamson (US 4,408,936)." In support of the rejection, the Patent Office states the following:

Stencel does not disclose the "linear gradient" of the grooves. As seen in Figs. 8 and 9, Williamson discloses splines (63) having a "linear gradient". At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to form the grooves of Stencel as having a linear gradient as disclosed in Williamson to

improve the ability to clamp the cams. The linear gradient forms a more gradual incline to reduce the effort to deform and clamp the cams. The claimed ranges/preferred dimensions would have been recognized depending upon the particular use of the invention. It is well known to vary the size of fasteners depending upon the particular application.

Applicant respectfully traverses the foregoing rejection. Claims 5, 8-12 and 19-21 depend from claim 1. As noted above, claim 1 is patentable over Stencel. Williamson fails to cure all of the deficiencies of Stencel with respect to claim 1. Therefore, based at least on their respective dependencies from claim 1, claims 5, 8-12 and 19-21 are patentable over Stencel in view of Williamson.

Accordingly, for at least the above reasons, the foregoing rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 22 depends from claim 1 and is patentable over the applied references for at least the same reasons given above for claim 1. In addition, claim 22 is further patentable for the reason that it recites that the straining ring has a hexagonal outer contour. This feature for a straining ring is not taught or suggested by the references.

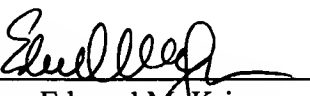
In conclusion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this paper that are not accounted for, the Examiner is authorized to charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 11-1755. If a fee is

required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 that is not accounted for already, such an extension of time is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

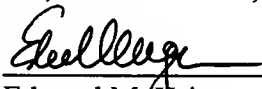
Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on December 15, 2004.


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